

for that child. I call it "one-stop shopping," and you can get help on all our programs.

The second key factor that turned our programs around: We made a commitment to funding. Child care is expensive. Quality costs more than most young families in the military can afford today. We have a cost-sharing system between us and the parents. In our centers in school-age programs, parent fees are based on a sliding scale on their total family income. In our family child care program, we use appropriated funds to provide training and equipment and in some cases, direct cash subsidies to our providers. I should point out that the one distinction in our funding is that the government share goes directly to the program, not to the parent. This share is used to improve wages and training as well as reduce the fees that the parent may incur.

The third thing we did: We instituted strict oversight. We do quarterly unannounced inspections. We have a system of checks and balances that require higher headquarters' involvement. We started a worldwide accessible child abuse and safety hot line.

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Anybody can call it any time of the day. We have a firm fix, waive, or close policy for facilities that do not meet the standards. And our standards fall within the mid-range of those in the states. What is different is we enforce our standards.

The fourth thing we did: We tied wages to training. Care-givers enter at about \$6.50 an hour plus benefits and progress to about \$9.00 an hour at the entry level. We have stringent requirements on training for all our care-giver personnel. Completion of training leads to promotion. Failure to finish training leads to dismissal. Our turnover rate, once as high as 300 percent, is now less than 40 percent. Now, this is still higher than we would desire but -- remember I mentioned to you that our military families move on the average of every three years -- the bulk of our staff is usually a service member's spouse who, when transferred, will usually continue employment in our child care system at the next installation. So we can help develop the professionalism of some unsung heroes, our child care providers.

The last thing that we did: We committed

ourselves to the national accreditation standards. Today over 75 percent of all eligible military child development centers are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This compares to the national average of 5 to 8 percent. That figure speaks for itself.

(Applause.)

Here is the bottom line: A beneficial child development program requires three things: commitment, by all levels of informed leadership, and it starts at the top; standards, must be known and enforced and accreditation is a must; and lastly, funding, the investment of resources is a direct link to making a difference in the lives of our children, our most precious resource.

We in the Department of Defense stand eager and ready to assist any organization in any state in any way we can to make life better for children. We've been there, done that, and got the T-shirt for it.

(Applause.)

As Whitney Houston says in her song, "Greatest Love of All," I believe the children are our future;

teach them well and let them lead the way. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Well, General, you deserve more than a T-shirt, and we are grateful for that very cogent description of what it took to make the military system so effective.

I wanted to ask, at the April conference the President held up the Department of Defense as a model of child care delivery and asked DOD to share its expertise, and as you ended your remarks, you made that offer -- that you are ready to work with anyone. Can you tell us what has been done to try to create some bridges between the military and civilian child care world?

GEN. MEYER: Yes, ma'am. Since the President's memorandum about six months ago, I am sort of proud of what the Department of Defense has done. It is a large bureaucracy, and the Department really took on the challenge. We have formed a partnership with the Child Care Bureau of HHS. We also formed a partnership with the General Services Administration. The three organizations work hand-in-glove in

everything we do.

We have also developed a speaking kit, brochures, tri-folds on important subject matters, a video, and we are putting the finishing touches to a bibliography of every Department of Defense's child development training piece guide that is available. And we just finished creating a directory of all our facilities in every state -- name, phone number. All those will be mailed out by the end of next month by HHS to all the state point-of-contacts.

We also started a 1-888-CDP-3040 line for anybody that would like any of those training materials. You can call in and we will ship those to you. Hopefully also, by the end of next month, we will have all those materials on the Internet available for any home care provider in their computer or anybody that wants them. We have also established a cadre of trained speakers that are willing to go out to any facility in any state and provide any guidance or assistance we can.

The bottom line is, we do not have a lock on all the good news stories but we have some successes.

And if we can pass on those successes or help anybody else, we will be more than glad to.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well, General, what would you say to those who argue that the military is not a model that a lot of others could follow, because it has such unique characteristics and the federal government spends a lot of money on it. How do you respond to those who say that?

GEN. MEYER: Mr. Vice President, I would say this: The Department of Defense has been going through a downsizing exercise since the end of the Persian Gulf War. Our resources are not near what they used to be five to eight years ago, so the child developers of the military have to compete for their resources just like those that are purchasing tanks, planes, ships, acquisition. It does not come in a little neat package that is fenced just for child development. So you will find that our child development folks, inside that Pentagon, are fighting for dollars as much as the folks are fighting for more ships or more tanks.

And the key is our leadership. Our leadership is committed that they are going to provide the amount

of money we need to provide quality care, and that is the difference. We do have quality care, but without that commitment, sir, we would be in a hard position.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well, thank you very much. I think people have often heard and I have heard it said myself plenty of times that the key to any organization doing the right thing on an issue like this is leadership from the top. So I certainly agree with that.

Now, the First Lady has asked me to share with her the duties of moderating this panel, so I would like to call next Jane Maroney, who is a state legislator from Delaware. And incidentally, I failed to acknowledge Congressman Bob Weygand earlier. The Congress has a vote on right now but I wanted to remedy that oversight. I would like to invite Jane Maroney to give us another perspective on the role of states in improving child care.

MS. MARONEY: Thank you, Mr. Vice President. We serve the National Congress of State Legislators. My role, in five minutes, is to describe to you exemplary programs that are going on around the

country. I don't think I can count to 50 in five minutes but I will try to talk a little bit about where we have come from some years ago and where we may be heading.

In this most recent phase of federalism, I believe that states are where the action is. State legislators have been in the forefront of this issue for nearly a decade. Flexibility has enabled policy-makers on the local level to balance the need for programs that provide adequate, affordable, age-appropriate and quality child care, to determine best practices, all the while recognizing all the competing interests for limited resources.

States have been close to the families as changes in the economy have impacted the lives of parents and their children. How are we doing? Well, things are better than they were 10 years ago, but not so much that more does not need to be done. Eight years ago, during the congressional deliberations on the Act for Better Child Care, I testified before Senator Moynihan's Committee on Standards, and here we are today assessing where we have been and where we may

be going as the new millennium approaches.

Recent brain research, as we heard this morning, has demonstrated that children's brains in the early years from zero to three are far more developed than the average citizen ever believed that they were, and society needs to respond to those newly recognized capabilities with a greater emphasis on child development and age-appropriate programs. This presents an enormous challenge to all of us.

This conference today serves as a call to arms to parents. They must come forward and demand more from their state legislators. They need to describe what it is they want and what they need to meet their goals for their families. They must be empowered to speak out for quality, no matter what their income level is. They are the best first advocates for their children.

If they are involved in their out-of-home child care early on, those good habits may transcend into a continued relationship with their schools as children move from early care to the K through 12 years. I am sure that my good friend, former governor

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and Secretary Riley, would view that as a very major investment with a great payoff for our nation's schools.

Quality issues have outstretched access as the number one issue. Affordability and quality are inextricably linked. We must increase our interactions with business to coordinate with proven early childhood models. We need to develop strategies that link Head Start, preschool with child support initiatives, to constantly ask ourselves, what is a good program? The linkage to transportation is a critical question as parents travel from home to child care and on to their work site only to reverse those tracks at the end of the day.

Now, at this moment I would like to pay homage to my two mentors. When I began looking at this issue of child care in the early '80s as a member of the state legislature in Delaware, there were two women who stood out in my mind as being the examples for what really needed to be done. One is Gwen Morgan from Wheelock College, who is here, who crafted the word "trilemma." I had never heard of it until Gwen came to

Wilmington and talked about the trilemma of access, affordability, and quality. And I still do not think it has made the dictionary yet, Gwen, but I think that we will before the end of the century.

And to Faith Wall, who is here, who, again, was such a model to me as she worked in the Dupont Company and really brought child care to its forefront, I remember writing to the CEO at one time, talking about the needs for early child education and child care, and I decided, how will I get Ed Jefferson to write me an answer back? So at the end of the letter I just wrote "Give my love to Winnie," his wife, with whom I had worked as a volunteer, and the answer came back, "Well, we have done surveys in all of our plants around the country and there doesn't seem to be the demand for it." You know, the usual -- sort of the early 1980s' approach toward child care, that it was the parents' responsibility. They were meant to come to the work site ready to deal with the work problems and to leave all of their family problems behind. So I am really grateful to both of you who are here this afternoon to have encouraged me to maintain my interest

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in this area.

I would like to talk a minute about family day care. Family day care and quality continues to be a dilemma for state policy-makers. How do we elevate quality when reimbursement rates are so low? We heard much of that this morning. There are incredible opportunities, however, to help children reach their potential because family day care is growing exponentially with the pressure of welfare reform. States can use reimbursement for better training, which will raise the bar on standards. More accreditation by a variety of organizations, of which NAEYC is only one. There are many others in localities around the country that can be looked at as models.

We can use a differential payment rate for those providers who improve services to use the payment structure to enhance quality. Some states are providing dollars for nontraditional care for shift workers, for instance. Others give exemptions from utility taxes and for student loans. Banks provide dollars to family providers at a low interest rate. Sick child care is a critical need in the states. The

YMCA in my big city, Wilmington, Delaware, the major city, had to close its doors with their very fine quality in sick child care. The overhead costs were just too great. We have to find ways to deal with that. And we need to look for other good models around the country.

Now, looking to the future: How can the federal government be helpful to states? And I have looked at several aspects where I think it might be helpful. Again, we heard some cliches, which I am going to repeat this morning, of Governor Hunt's. We need to ask the federal government to make this a priority issue, to use its bully pulpit for a whole variety of reasons. We need to help parents become better consumers of child care. We need to help employers see child care as a benefit to their employees which makes them become more productive workers. Reliable child care eliminates absenteeism as parents are caught between the "my kid and my job."

We need to help states by highlighting best practices, to provide technical assistance to states -- and I am sorry that Secretary Shalala is not here to

hear this request -- to provide state legislators with a hands-on, how-to-get-it-done approach. We have good models all over this country but it takes a real, real effort to adapt those programs that work in Oshkosh, Wisconsin and adapt them to Milford, Delaware, a little town in the southern part of our state.

We need to be able to get to the local environment, those small towns, the importance, the significance of that zero to five. We know absolutely, and Secretary Riley has said this frequently and our own chairman of the board of education in my state when I endeavored to get him to be interested in this zero to five population, his point was that you are into remediation if the zero to five years have not been successful and that you spend the rest of your K through 12 in remediation for that child who has not made that successful transition. But there are certainly many, many differences in our towns and our major areas.

I would ask for HHS to become a presence in state capitals. We need to ask the staffs from the regional offices to come to the state capitals, to

provide that technical assistance to help the local governments with the dilemma of how to put state dollars, where to put them, resolving the balance between the needs of the working poor and the welfare recipients. That's a very, very big issue in states.

We need some help with linkages to Head Start. Delaware has invested our own dollars -- its own dollars into the program and hope to have all eligible four-year-olds enrolled by the year 2000. It has now gone back a year. We hope to have that done by 1999 so that by the year 2000, we could begin to enroll eligible three-year-olds. That is going to be put off a year.

We are also looking to incorporate the Montessori method, which is so successful for children in that mixed age group of those early years, to incorporate those programs into some of our Head Start programs. We need help with this. This is not something that we can just decide -- it isn't that the appropriations committee, of which I am a member, decides that this is an appropriate thing to do, but how do you do that, how do you get the bully pulpit to

get that done? Those are the kinds of things that I think the federal government can help us get done.

We need to maintain a healthy partnership between the states and the federal government. We have been very gratified -- I talked to Joan Lombardi at lunch today -- how grateful states are, how quickly she got regulations done on the Child Care Development Fund Act by bringing in state authorities or participants and getting those regulations done together. That's the kind of thing, when we look at the fact that some of the welfare reform initiatives are not yet out in regulation. We, in Delaware, are into almost our third year of welfare reform and yet we do not have the clear delineation of how we will really need to get all that done. But we need primarily to work together in the partnership that was so eloquently articulated this morning.

Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Vice President, I am honored to be a part of your conversation and look forward to helping articulate your agenda. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you so much.

Representative Maroney has to leave us to make another engagement, and I want to thank you for that very thoughtful description and also for being quite specific about what you think the federal government should do to work with and assist states. And we will take those ideas and follow up on them. So thank you very much.

We will next hear from Dr. Susan Aronson, member of the national board of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who has a long-standing interest and expertise in the role that health professionals can play in improving the quality of child care, with special attention to health and safety. Dr. Aronson.

DR. ARONSON: Thank you, Mrs. Clinton, and thank you, Vice President Gore, and hi to all of those of you who call me Dr. Soos.

I speak to you as a pediatrician and as a working mother who was challenged to find good quality care when my own children were young, and now as the grandmother of an absolutely wonderful 15-month-old little boy who is in child care while his mom and dad are at work. I also represent 53,000 members of the

American Academy of Pediatrics, pediatricians who know that babies and young children need nurturing and the right kind of stimulation in a safe and healthy environment during early life.

Health and safety is an essential component, an integral component, of good quality child care. Safe and healthy child care includes three crucial elements: avoiding harm, promoting health, and partnering with health professionals.

Now, let's begin with avoiding harm. We have already heard about the number one source of harm we must avoid, and that is the absence of warm relationships between children and competent caregivers. Now, I will highlight what we must do about infections and injury to other sources of harm.

In group care, children not only share toys, they share germs. But immunization and hygiene are effective ways to control infectious disease. Most kids are fully immunized by the time they enter kindergarten because state laws that were promoted by federal incentives require it. Overall, kids in child care are better immunized than the population as a

whole because most states expect some documentation of immunization of children in regulated care.

If proposed federal regulations are enacted, all children in federally-subsidized child care will need up-to-date immunization. Such rules encourage more parents to vaccinate their children on time -- when they are babies -- instead of putting it off until they go to regular school.

Immunization is very effective, but so is hygiene. Some of you heard me remind you to wash your hands before lunch. Care-givers and children should wash their hands before eating, after diaper-changing or using the toilet, after wiping running noses or playing outside. Research shows that when hand-washing is combined with routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently-touched surfaces, kids get sick less often. Children in child care get fewer colds, fewer ear infections and diarrhea when child care providers practice good hygiene routines.

We can also avoid harm by preventing injuries in child care. Hour for hour of contact time in regulated child care centers, children are safer than

they are in their own homes. But those who go to someone else's home -- a family child care home for child care -- are injured more often per hour of contact than they are in their own homes.

Mixing child care with adult activities in the same setting increases risk and requires special attention to safety measures, and yet these are the facilities which have the least amount of oversight, involvement, consultation, and expertise brought to them. Many of these injuries are preventable.

Here's some simple ways to keep children safe in child care. The largest number of the most severe injuries that occur in child care happen when children fall from a climbing structure to a hard surface, either indoors or outdoors. Impact absorbing surfacing material and lowering the height of play equipment can prevent these injuries. Finger-pinching in doors is painful and a common source of injury in child care. Installation of rubber gaskets in the doorjambs is an inexpensive way to stop these hurts. In France, as Mrs. Clinton knows because we saw it there and now in Australia, the installation of these gaskets on doors

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is universal in every child care room.

Many parents take their children to and from child care by car or walk to and from public transportation. Correct use of car seats and seat belts as well as education and environmental changes that facilitate pedestrian safety would prevent many of these injuries. And the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has programs that empower child care workers to teach parents and children how to buckle up and walk safely.

Finally, many child care buildings are old and full of lead, asbestos, and other environmental hazards. We either need to clean up these buildings or relocate child care to other, safer places.

Okay, we've talked about avoiding harm, and I have mentioned how child care can promote health by preventing infection and injury. Now, let's discuss more opportunities for promoting health in child care and partnering with health professionals. First, we will do promoting health.

It is just this simple: Many babies and children are in group care while their parents work or

go to school. We can reach these families through child care to make sure that kids get connected with the medical care they need. Child care also offers many opportunities for parents and children to learn about to avoid health risks. Just as we use schools to reach and teach many children at one time, we can use child care to reach many babies and young children and their young, usually inexperienced, parents and teach them how to have a lifetime of good health.

Now, we've talked about avoiding harm and promoting health. Let's talk about partnering with health professionals to improve quality. Here is some examples of successful partnerships between health and early childhood education professionals that are already helping children. The Head Start health component was one of the first ways this nation brought health professionals together with early childhood educators to foster the good health of young children. And I am proud to say that I got much of my training from Head Start when, in the '60s, I was assigned to be a health consultant to the Howard University Head Start Program.

Head Start has led the way and can do more to model health and safety for all types of early childhood programs. The Healthy Child Care America campaign is a public/private partnership, launched by the Administration for Children and Families in the Child Care Bureau, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, both of HHS, and it is coordinated by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Healthy Child Care America links government agencies, health professionals, early childhood educators and parents to promote health and safety in child care at the national, state, and local level. The campaign outlines 10 steps communities can take in its blueprint for action. Anyone interested in general information about Healthy Child Care America can call the 800 number -- the general gave an 800 number, I'll give one too -- 888-227-5409, send an E-mail message to Child Care at aap.org or get information about the Healthy Child Care America campaign from the Internet.

Let me also mention two special publications that help make up the border of that quilt that Patty Siegel described this morning. It defines the

expectations that we should have for what children really need. Caring for Our Children was published in 1992 by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of HHS, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Public Health Association.

And this year, a subset of the Standards in Caring for Our Children -- standards for out-of-home child care, a subset called Stepping Stones, stepping stones to quality, was published and these are the measures that are most closely linked with the prevention of death, disability and disease. These guidelines are effective tools for building the consensus about what makes child care safe and healthy.

Incidentally, Caring for Our Children includes standards for the licensing of individual care-givers and also requires that appropriate benefits, training, and support for those care-givers be offered so that they can do the good job that we need from them.

Already these publications have become basic texts for use by knowledgeable trainers, consultants, providers, licensing agency, and policy makers at all levels. MCHB also established the National Resource

Center for Health and Safety in Child Care. And the Caring for Our Children and Stepping Stones publications, as well as every state's regulations, are published on the Internet site of the National Resource Center.

These programs I have just mentioned are examples of the way that government and private organizations are supporting and educating all those involved in improving the quality of child care. All types of care givers, including those who provide care in their own homes and family child care homes or in the child's home, need access to technical assistance and training.

We all grew up with nurses and health programs in our schools but very few child care programs, even those that serve the tiniest babies, have any regular source of health professional advice. We need to arrange for health professional involvement in child care. Health professionals for child care can be nurses or doctors who are outreach workers from managed care or other health care institutions, from school health programs, from home health programs such as the

Visiting Nurse Association or nurses based at Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

In conclusion, the information and recommendations I have shared here come from my nearly 30 years of experience as a pediatric consultant for child care and from the collected experience and knowledge of my fellow pediatricians.

Today I emphasize prevention because although pediatricians treat illness, injury, and disability, we prefer to prevent those problems. Our children deserve to be safe and healthy. So remember the three crucial elements of safe and healthy child care: avoiding harm, promoting health, and partnering with health professionals to improve quality.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Dr. Aronson, how can the health community partner with parents in a child care setting if a child has a chronic illness like asthma or if a child has disabilities that need special attention from health care providers? What thoughts do you have about those situations?

DR. ARONSON: That is a very important question, because nearly 7 percent of the population now has asthma of children and it would be very difficult to find a child care setting where children with asthma are not in care. And I can give you a very direct personal experience, when one of my own patients who had asthma had been in the emergency room 13 times in a year and the medicine that I was prescribing for him was supposedly being given correctly. I decided to check out his child care program.

And simply involving myself very briefly with a limited interaction with his child care providers, I discovered he was not getting his medicine during the day and that he was receiving care in the basement of a church where there was mold and other things that were triggering his asthma. By making those simple observations and instituting some corrective action, that child stayed out of the emergency room entirely in the next year.

What we need to do is to think about where children are and to encourage both health professionals and early childhood professionals to talk with each

other so that we can identify children's special needs and make appropriate plans for caring for them.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much, Dr. Sue. I am a big advocate of hand-washing, so I hope that everyone took that to heart. You know, we know that much of the care of our children goes on in religious settings, in many different varieties of settings all over our country. And it is very important for us to discuss the role of the faith community in addressing child care and supporting families because we know that is where a lot of children are and where a lot of children and families look to to get the kind of support they need.

And we are delighted to have Bishop Joseph Sullivan with us today to talk to us about that very important role that is going on now and that we need to look to for good models and advice. Bishop Sullivan.

BISHOP SULLIVAN: Thank you. Mr. Vice President and Mrs. Clinton, it is an honor to have been asked to serve at a panel where we have heard such wisdom, both distilled from knowledge and research experience, and to realize that the broad consensus is

there are no simple solutions. This is more complex than one bullet solution of any particular program and it will involve more than one part of the community. And the religious is really one segment of the community. I will have a different perspective because I don't want to repeat; as Senator Dodd indicated today, many wonderful things have already been said.

Let me give you a different perspective. I come from the street up. As you know, I come from Brooklyn, by my accent. And that perspective is essential as an operator, one who has provided day care and Head Start services and largely in poor communities. I think if there is anything that we, as Americans and as a nation, ought to be concerned about, is what I think is not happening for children.

In this country, the full realization that 20 percent of children are born into poverty and that a third of the children are born out of wedlock. And in the big cities, such as my own, it is probably double the 20 percent of children who live below the poverty level.

Why I promoted day care as a way of moving in

the future, where subsequently many people felt that this was a danger to the family, we began it from the religious community's perspective primarily to preserve the family. For any single parents under the stress -- I saw it from the other side. I saw it from the perspective of foster care -- what happens to children when they are taken away from their homes, and I could tell you that that is probably the most scarring experience for a youngster for their lifetime when they are removed from their own natural family.

So we did day care primarily to make it possible for women who were trying -- mostly single women in poor communities -- who were trying to preserve their family. And the most important worker, outside of the teacher and obviously the administration, is the family counselor. The person who has time for the parents. And I could tell you by experience, when the budget cuts came in my town, the first that went was the family counselor, which, to me, is the most vital link between the parent and the child, and we are only subsidiary, it seems to me. All the day care, no matter how good it is, really is

always substitute.

We have to understand that we have to involve the parents in the raising of their own children. From a church perspective, a temple or a mosque perspective, I believe every religious community, every pastor, every congregation ought to establish as its clear priority, what are we doing as a community to assist the families in this community in the raising of their children?

And in a very real way, I could tell you, while we have now the so-called welfare reform and what the potentials are down the line when the time limits come up, as they have already in some states and the dire predictions about children, the great need for governors who have gotten up-front monies to invest in welfare in the training and education of the parent and also basically for the child care support systems. In some states they have used that money to reduce deficits.

I believe some of the leading governors in the country realize it would cost more to make welfare work because you would have to provide, not only education

and training, you would have to provide the child care supports.

(Applause.)

So it would be my hope that the religious community, which is neighborhood-based, interacts with families, understands the stresses placed on parents in today's world, not only in terms of the tremendous effort -- I am amazed when I see the community in the early hours of the morning getting up, getting out to work, having to drop a child off, and not always having the greatest of opportunities to find a quality place, and then worrying during the daytime. Then they come back having to get supper and they have to do the homework with the kids and then they have to do the cleaning and the cooking. I mean it is incredible the stresses that are laid on parents, particularly women, in the raising of their children.

So it becomes critical to me for the religious community to rally, not only the use of resources, which are building some facilities, but to rally through volunteers. We have a capacity to involve many people of good will.

Now, the second point I just want to make is the importance of training. I could tell you and as it has already been mentioned by the Senator from Delaware, we are doing day care with Montessori training methods. We are now educating people who have come off the welfare rolls and we are trying to educate them in the Montessori with 60 hours of training so that they can get the basics, not that they will become the teacher, but a teacher aide. I do not believe that we should allow welfare recipients to be considered as a work station for workfare. It should only be because they want to do it and then secondly because they are trained and have the capacity to do it.

(Applause.)

I really feel, with creativity and imagination, that the governor this morning made it very clear that it has to be a priority for the overall society. I believe we can do some very imaginative, creative opportunities around group day care where we then recruit people for family day care and where we integrate the training and the education and the oversight from the group day care center so that they

could come in from the homes and watch and observe so that when they are out in the homes, which is much more difficult to supervise -- but we do not want baby-sitting, we do not want T.V. watching all day long, and somebody just giving it because it is a workfare way of working off their welfare.

From my perspective, the real hope for this country is that we invest in our children. And I do not care, quite frankly, if that costs us more as taxpayers. If we really believe in the future and we want this country to work, it is not going to work without investing in the youngsters.

(Applause.)

I just hope that what we are doing today is a culmination rather than a beginning. A culmination of a lot of people in this room who have believed it for a long, long time and have come today to see that the highest level of our government in the White House itself, we have the President and First Lady taking this on as a major priority. We heard at lunch that Congress is also willing to do that in the next session. My hope is we will do a far better job around

moving this agenda than we are doing at the present time for the poor kids in this country.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Bishop, thank you so much for your very eloquent comments. Religious institutions have, of course, long been in the forefront of meeting child care needs. How, in your view, can we build on those efforts and engage religious leaders, who may not be like you and may not have previously been involved as leaders on this issue, and get them to use their moral authority in the communities where they live and teach and lead to help the community grapple with these challenges?

BISHOP SULLIVAN: As with anything in this society where everybody could rally around on every different perspective and on every point-of-view, but it ought to be around the future of the children of this country. There are ideological differences in the society around child rearing, but from my point of view there is a common ground and the common ground is -- nobody backs away when they see a kid whose whole

future is at risk -- if we are not going to provide what I think are the up-start, up-front services.

So I believe we need leadership, both in the political community, in the religious sector, in the educational sector, in the overall nonprofit sector, and certainly in the business sector. We need a leadership that comes together. I tell you I believe if we can explain it and articulate it, the people who are doing the job are the best promoters and articulators of what is the demand and what is the need. If we could unleash this tremendous capacity of both the providers and the parents who have benefited, I do not think there would be any religious community that would back off and say that we should not be involved.

And so I hope that we do not look and say one sector is going to do it. I believe the religious has a very important part; the moral and spiritual development of children, we have something to add to that. I think we ought to do it very conscientiously and, quite frankly, we ought to do it by participating in the broad community. So it is not how we alone do

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it. It is how all of us do it together.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: That's great. Thank you very much. I want to turn now to John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, and would like to express a comment in an aside that workplaces that are organized often have a forceful and fruitful dialogue on these issues. But I would like to ask John Sweeney to discuss the role of the labor community in meeting the child care needs of working families.

MR. SWEENEY: Thank you, Mr. Vice President and thank you, Mrs. Clinton. I am really delighted to participate on this panel and to participate as a representative of nearly 40 million members of union households all across our country as well as 144 million working Americans who make ours the strongest and most productive economy in the world.

Unions have had a long history in working for affordable, high quality child care. We created child care programs for women in the apparel industry, in the needle trades unions, almost 60 years ago. We supported child care centers during World War II, which

made it possible for women to join the work force in big numbers, and we opposed dismantling those centers after the war.

Today we bargain for a wide range of child care services in every industry, in the private as well as in the public sector, and when we are successful workers benefit, their employers benefit, and our communities benefit. It is a partnership that really works. But what we can accomplish at the bargaining table just is not enough, especially for the many working parents who are not members of unions. With more and more family members having to work longer and longer hours in a battle against wage stagnation, lack of good child care alternatives has become a bigger and bigger problem.

Recently, we asked 50,000 women about their jobs in a national survey, "Ask a Working Woman," and they told us child care is a priority concern. They said finding affordable care has gotten worse over the past five years. Three-quarters of working mothers with young children say child care is important to them but only one in ten has any child care benefits. The

problem of child care is most acute for young women, single mothers, and women of color. And women workers say they want employers, government, and unions to play a role in solving the problem.

Today's unions are also concerned about child care workers. They are more highly educated than most workers but are paid less, as the President told us this morning. I was also glad to hear Gen. Meyer mention the linkage in the Department of Defense program of wages to training. And these workers usually do not have benefits, unlike the Department of Defense workers. They have the highest turnover rate of any job except gas station attendants. And it is not because they are not committed, they simply cannot afford to work in the child care field and they leave as soon as they can find better-paying jobs.

Investing in more child care, whether the money comes from employers or from tax dollars, is just good common sense. Workers who do not have to worry about their children are more productive. Children with adequate supervision and care are less likely to become a burden for their families or for society. And

child care workers who are compensated decently for their hard work, for their compassion, and their commitment, are more likely to provide high quality care.

This is the right time for our nation to come together and decide to devote more private and public resources to make child care available, available to working families who need it and to improve the quality of that care and to increase incentives for qualified workers to enter and stay in the child care field.

The labor movement is committed together with management in many parts of the country to continuing this dialogue, to looking forward to working together with all of you in providing the best care for all of our children.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: At the end of your remarks, you talked about a partnership between business and labor and I was wondering if you could give us any examples that you think demonstrate how that partnership can work well?

MR. SWEENEY: They are many good examples around the country, but I would just like to cite one which I think is a pretty good one. I believe Bishop Sullivan is familiar with this as well. And that's the 1199 National Health and Human Services Union in New York negotiated a child care fund back in 1989, and that fund covers 39,000 health care workers and 168 hospitals in the New York City area and other health care facilities as well.

Employers contribute a percentage of gross payroll to the fund and a labor-management committee at each one of the institutions discusses and lays out the program, decides what benefits to offer at that site, what kind of benefits the workers are most interested in, and the benefits cover a wide range of areas. They include cash vouchers for child care. They include cash vouchers for after-school care. Summer camp subsidies. Child care resource and referral services. A holiday program. Cultural arts program. And a child care center.

The program is very popular with the workers and very popular with management but it is also solidly

supported by the union and by the employers. And they have been able to measure the results in terms of increased productivity, less time lost from work, and longer retention of career employees. And that is just one example. There is many other examples in both the private sector as well as the public sector.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: John, let me ask you about the child care work force. There has been some discussion about the various needs the work force has and there has been mention of the fact that the key to the quality of child care is the child care-giver. What can we do to support and retain high quality, well-trained child care workers?

MR. SWEENEY: I think we have heard much said about that today but I think it could be summarized by saying, they really need what all other workers need; they need livable wages, they need decent benefits, good working conditions, and they need training and most of all, I guess, they need respect. Most child care workers have no benefits, have no health care, have no pensions. Most do not make enough to put their own children in child care.

On the other hand, we cannot expect parents, who are already stressed as far as they can go, to shell out for higher pay and better benefits. And that is why we need government and we need business to play a bigger role and to make a stronger investment in America's working families, and I think that it will really provide enormous dividends.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. Well, we have someone with us who knows a lot about child care providers and that is Beatriz Otero, the executive director of the Calvary Bi-Lingual Multicultural Learning Center. And I want to ask her to talk about the role and responsibility of child care providers, both in the workplace and in the community.

MS. OTERO: Thank you very much, Mrs. Clinton and Vice President Gore. It is a pleasure and an honor to be here and to participate in this conference. Hopefully, I will do justice to all fellow providers in what I will be saying today and bring a perspective to the table that, I think, has been shared by others.

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But when you are at the door at 7 o'clock a.m. every morning, every day, receiving 100 children a day, it is that all of the things that you hear today become very, very real on a daily basis.

I am here as an educator, as a child care provider, and as a parent of three children. Secretary Riley, I wish I would have known we were sharing pictures, I would have brought mine because I am very proud of the three that I have who have been through child care, very fortunately, with me, since I have been a provider for most of my life.

I started my teaching profession when I graduated from Maryland University as a child care worker. I stayed in the field for about five years and, like many others, left the field for a better-paying job. But about 11 years ago, I was persuaded by a group of working moms in our neighborhood and the local church, who were seeking alternatives for child care, to come help develop a child care center.

We established a small, early childhood development program in the Columbia Heights

neighborhood of Washington, D.C. And most of you know the city, it is a very mixed neighborhood, mixed income, and culturally very diverse so it was a very, very challenging effort. That small program has, in the last 11 years, grown to serve now 220 children and their families, providing early childhood education, before- and after-school care to elementary and now junior high students, and a home visitation program for mothers and their babies until they are able to come into the day care.

We do all of this now in a building that was donated to us by the Bell Atlantic Company of Washington, D.C. So that we are an example of the kind of partnering that can take place at a very local level.

As I listen to the various perspectives today, I am heartened by the fact that we are redefining child care as an urgent issue that affects all of us. Child care is a struggle, as we have heard, for parents, for providers, for employers, and certainly for children. Let me tell you, as a child care director, of some of the responsibilities that I have.

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I am no longer in the classroom. My responsibility is to assure that a center functions well and it functions well for children and for families. I work to provide quality and affordable care. I work to ensure that the education we provide is developmentally appropriate. I am responsive to the needs of families and I support my staff as professionals and as educators.

In order to do my job, I must be a business manager, an educator, a fund-raiser, a building manager, a community advocate, a social worker every single day. Some days my tasks are daunting, but I always remember the hurdles that the parents who come to our center have and how tremendous those hurdles are and what they have to go through.

So let me give you just a situation of a parent in early October and how the work of our center, in conjunction with the schools and with other community organizations, supports a single family. I received a phone call from a principal in a neighborhood school at about 6 o'clock p.m. in the afternoon who said to me, "I have a six-year-old child

here who has been staying in the playground for the last three days until 6 p.m. until his mother picks him up. I have the mother here and she tells me she gets out of work at 5:30 p.m. and she has no one to pick up the child and she simply has decided to have the child be taken care of by the equipment in that playground."

I asked her to send the mother over to the center and we are a block away, and as I talked to the parent the parent is now aware that the principal has told her that if this happens again, she has to call the police and protective services, because this is a neglect issue. As I talked to the parent, I find that she has recently been employed at a sandal shop in the neighborhood and she is too afraid to tell the employer that she needs flexible hours or different hours so that she can, in fact, drop off her child and pick up her child.

Her child goes to school from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. -- thanks to three weeks of closing earlier in September, we now have a bit longer school hours in the District of Columbia -- she starts work at 7:30 a.m. She goes to work, opens the shop, gets back on

the bus, comes back, picks up her child, takes him to school, goes back to the sandal shop, comes back at 5:30 p.m. and picks up the child from the school playground.

As I talked to this mom, she is clearly eligible for subsidized care, but she is a critical, emergency situation. It is my role to support that family. So I take the child into the center on an emergency basis, under scholarship, because I am a good fund-raiser and I have a little bit of money so I can provide a parent with a scholarship until her subsidy comes through.

For subsidized care, we need to get her proof of income and her proof of where she lives and her family size and collect documents, and remember, this is a mother who has this job that does not allow her to necessarily have the time to go to get all of these things in line. Three or four weeks later, the child is still at the center under scholarship. The mother has now accumulated a debt, because we cannot really cover her, even though we have given her a 50 percent scholarship, because we cannot get the employer to

verify income because that employer happens to be paying her cash and is not willing to give her any verification of employment.

This is not her fault. She has a job. She is working and she is supporting the child. So I have a commitment, and everybody who comes by our center will tell you, I have never turned a parent away because they cannot afford to pay. But this mom is still at the center and so is the child and hopefully, after I have a conversation with Barbara Cammero, who is here, who is our local -- she will figure out for me how I can get this parent subsidized so that she does not have to worry about the subsidy.

In the meantime, the six-year-old boy is at Calvary Learning Center in the mornings at 8:00 o'clock a.m. Gets breakfast. Gets walked to school. At 3:30 p.m., he gets picked up by the same counselor every day, who connects with his teacher to find out exactly what that child is doing in school and how he is doing. He receives tutoring at the learning center, coordinated by the Howard University Americorps program, that comes to our center to provide tutoring.

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He receives enrichment activities from the Corcoran School of the Arts, with whom we have partnered and he benefits from programs such as America Reads that are coordinated by the Foundry United Methodist Church down the street, who sends volunteers to do that. So in this process, we have now engaged five different organizations to support and provide care for this child.

This is not a unique story. There are many families like this at our centers. Many of them with more than one child in more than one program. And the fact remains that we are not always able to secure the subsidy for every child who needs it or to sustain a large number of scholarships over extended periods of time.

I find it most painful when parents lose their subsidy after having sustained employment and began their economic gains and consequently exceed the income allowances of a subsidy program that has not been revamped for 15 years. But upon losing the subsidy, this parent's child care may triple, and at that point the parent faces a difficult choice -- give up hard-won

economic progress or place their children at risk by leaving them alone or placing them in substandard or cheaper care. We cannot allow a system that penalizes parents for succeeding. We need to make a long-term investment in families, and we have heard that over and over again.

(Applause.)

We at Calvary work precisely to make that kind of investment in families. We have grown as our children have grown. We have continually leveraged other resources for parenting classes, employment referrals, crisis intervention in order to sustain our commitment to support families. I know the risks children face if we simply terminate families because they accumulate a debt at the center.

As the director, I am constantly balancing between running a business and a social service organization, and the challenges of this are enormous. This balancing act, which every good center director works to achieve, cannot be sustained on an ad hoc basis if child care is to meet the challenges of the dramatically-increasing number of families entering our

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work force.

Here is what I think that we, as providers, need to do our jobs well: We need a financially stable child care delivery system.

(Applause.)

We need standardized monitoring that enforces quality standards. We need third party funding streams through employers. We need lower liability insurance costs. And we need training.

Let me close by saying a little bit about the District of Columbia, because I do not think that the kinds that we are going through in this city are any different than what is happening in cities across the country. At one point, the District of Columbia had a model child care system, but that system has eroded dangerously. Cumbersome licensing and monitoring processes have stalled renewal of licenses. Child care subsidies have not increased in nine years, creating a financial crisis for providers and keeping wages for child care workers so low that too many of them qualify for subsidies themselves. And you have heard that repeated throughout the day today.

It is this weakened system that we are now trying to get to meet the challenge of the Welfare Reform Act. The District's network of child care providers understands that promoting child care in the District for the District's children will require a significant fiscal investment, though we understand that the reform for the child care system also requires a reemphasis in early childhood education and early childhood development.

We cannot continue to regard child care as an institutionalized form of baby-sitting. Child care is fundamentally concerned with early childhood education and development. Early childhood development is the foundation for a child's lifelong learning achievement. The reform for child care is above all an educational challenge, and it is a challenge that we cannot afford to ignore.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you very much. That was really an excellent presentation. Before turning to the last member of the panel, I want to

acknowledge Congresswoman Connie Morella, who has joined us, and I mentioned earlier Congressman Bob Weygand, who had gone to a vote, but the members of Congress have long since come back from that vote. And Secretary Donna Shalala has rejoined the conference. The First Lady and I took some notes for you on an item we will talk to you about later, Donna. One of the panelists has a creative idea.

Our final panelist is Doug Price, who is president of the FirstBank of Colorado and chair of the Colorado Business Commission, and I want to thank Doug for participating in one of the family conferences that Tipper and I host each year. I also want to thank Governor Roy Romer for his leadership again, because I know, Doug, that you have been involved with what Governor Romer has under way in Colorado.

I would like to ask you to discuss the role of business leaders in meeting child care needs, and how you have become involved, and what you and others in Colorado are up to.

MR. PRICE: Thank you. With that opening question, once again, you prove yourself the most

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tactful man in America. The real question is why, after a day of experts, academics, policy-makers, and people who know what is going on, do we have such a -- let's just say such an ordinary fellow presenting? And let me assure you, I am the epitome of ordinary. I am a white, middle-class, middle-aged bank president, raised by a career military officer and a stay-at-home mom whose children have never seen the inside of a child care center. To quote one of Governor Romer's staff members, "I am the Antichrist of child care."

(Laughter.)

My introduction to child care came through Governor Romer, who asked me to chair Colorado's Business Commission on Child Care Financing. That commission was designed to re-engineer child care in its financing mechanisms. We, as business people, thought we could do it in four meetings.

(Laughter.)

What we came to understand, to quote an unnamed medical economist, was that when it came to child care, Adam Smith's invisible hand was all thumbs.

My interest in this field has been sustained

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by my family and my interest in their future, and by a mentor the governor and I share who has refused to allow my attention to wane and worked to have me invited to today's conference. My indigence about this issue came at Sunday dinner at the Macedonia Baptist Church, Colorado's largest African-American community church.

I basically had my patriotism challenged on this issue. The speaker was Rev. Alan Boesak, formerly of the African National Congress of South Africa, and he said this to the crowd. He said, "The greatness of a nation is no longer measured by the size and strength of its arsenal. The greatness of a nation is measured by the future it provides its children. We, in South Africa, revere your values. Now that I live in America and see how you treat your children, I fear that you have strayed from the path that led to your greatness. Unfortunately," he said, "the grace of God does not fall like rain from the sky. Instead it manifests itself in the actions of ordinary people."

So just what did Rev. Boesak mean? Now, Mrs. Clinton, with all this talk about Sunday and birthdays,

you are exempted from this next exercise, but the rest of you who gave your birth date to the Secret Service, I have you. So if you are over 40, raise your hands. Now, Mr. Vice President, if you are constitutionally permitted to run for President in say, three years, raise your hand? So, raise your hands.

(Laughter.)

Raise your hands high. If you are over 40, raise your hands high. Now, if your mother worked full-time -- keep them up -- full-time before you were the age of five, lower them. Okay, I'm looking around. Age of five -- if your mother worked full-time before you were the age of five, lower your hands. Okay, everybody lower their hands. We had, what, maybe 10, 15 percent of the room lower their hands.

I asked that same question to a group of high school students in San Diego. Eight out of ten -- eight out of ten lowered their hands. It was not until then that it became apparent that the neighborhood in the rear-view mirror I left behind in the morning as I went to work had changed. I had been seeing the neighborhood I was born into in 1956, not the

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neighborhood my children were being raised in in 1997, as a white, middle-aged, middle-class man. I was making decisions that affected my employees' children, my community's children, and my own children predicated on my own experiences as a child and not based upon the reality of today.

This may answer the President's question to Secretary Rubin this morning about why progress in child care is so slow.

(Applause.)

How has the world changed, and what has been the impact? Fourteen percent of women with children under the age of six were in the work force in 1950. Today that number is 62 percent, according to Secretary Rubin. Thirty-one percent of all children in America are born out of wedlock. Forty percent of all kids wake up each morning in a home without a father. What are we doing with those children when they wake up?

According to our panelists this morning, we remand them to an industry where we provide custodial care, not educational care. We remand them to an industry where, according to the cost and quality

study, the average wage is between six and \$7 per hour, yet the average profit is less than 2 percent. We remand them to an industry where, according to the film this morning, their primary care-giver is likely to change more than twice per year. We remand them to a system where 60 percent of care is developmentally neutral, 20 percent of care is negative or unsafe.

Think of what that means. Fully 50 percent of all our children are arriving at kindergarten with a meager developmental background and questionable preparation to learn. We are remanding our children to an industry where we would rather pay \$7 to subsidize remedial care for juvenile offenders than we would spend one dollar on quality care to assure it did not happen.

So here you have it. We have seen the most profound demographic change in the history of our union, and not a single institution, not schools, not government, not employment -- and for you women out there, you know it -- not even the family has been re-engineered to accommodate the effects of maternal work force participation. Our collective response has been

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to remand our children to care each day that is qualitatively suspect and financially nonsensical.

In Colorado, we have grown to understand that absent systemic change, the concept of affordable quality care is an oxymoron. Governor Hunt said it this morning, one of the members of our joint budget committee in Colorado said it -- a little less tactfully with a bit more of an earthy manner -- Jim Razzu, he said, "When you people come to talk to us" -- you people -- I was already a child care advocate. I was no longer a bank president. "When you guys come to talk to us about child care everything is piecemeal. Nothing you do has vision."

So as a result, this past Columbus Day in Colorado we began our own journey of discovery known as the Educare Colorado Initiative. Funded by Colorado's business and foundation communities and overseen by business, civic and government leaders, this initiative is designed to emerge with a comprehensive, integrated, strategic business plan to facilitate the formation of a functioning statewide child care system, not just for children on welfare but for children in all care.

The three principal targets of this study will be government, both on federal, state, and local levels, to assist them in the digestion of welfare reform dollars and to give them methods of spending them that will result in positive impact.

The second community is philanthropy. We intend to establish priorities for investment so that we can assure ourselves that both the fiscal and social infrastructure necessary to support systemic change occurs and then we will gear to towards employers to support the connection between profit and family-friendly work force practices.

The next sentence I think is important because it summarizes the gist of what we have talked about today. This effort is begun with a one-sentence vision in four guiding principles: Educare vision proposes to create a fully-funded, child-centered, parentally-involved, permanently sustainable, high quality, universal early care system that is appropriately monitored and evaluated.

Consider this issue: It is a lottery when you are born into a family that has child care. You have a

one in five chance of getting quality care in the greatest country on this earth; that is not sustainable, it is an outrage.

There are four guiding principles we propose for your consideration. We think that the combined impact of these principles establish Educare's agenda and advances the vision described earlier.

Principle number 1: The system design must be more than a traditional plan. It must include commitments that will assure its full implementation. While we must implement something of this scale in stages, our focus will be to create a full-scale effort over a defined period of time.

Principle number 2: Educare is designed to take advantage of this moment in time that is characterized by an unprecedented confluence of events and conditions; namely this, welfare reform. We now have three streams of funding, Head Start, Child Care Entitlement, and (inaudible) transfer dollars that may be the foundation to full funding for poor children and a lever to create quality for all children.

(2) We have a healthy economy. (3) The devolution of

government presses this type of reform into communities, into counties, into local municipalities where people are closest to the decisions. (4) Increasing public awareness of the importance of quality care in the earliest years based on the emerging brain research.

Let me assure you this: What is not different today is the way babies' brains develop compared to 50 years ago. What is different is the way babies are raised.

Principle number 3: Our goal is to develop a multi-module delivery system governed by market forces. Educare's purpose is not to compete with or undercut existing early care initiatives. We propose rather to explore how to combine existing and newly developed initiatives and funding sources in a manner that preserves that is currently working and builds on that to a point that meets a fundamental element of the vision; an array of child care choices for parents. This is fundamental in securing conservative political support for change. A monolithic K through 12 solution is untenable and will not be supported by the

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overwhelming majority of Americans.

Principle number 4: With regard to the existing initiatives and programs, Educare should provide a way for existing initiatives to connect with each other to create, much like the President discussed today, a system. From that point forward, all additions, increments, and enhancements will be made within that system. That system will begin with investments that create the social, physical and financial infrastructure that has long been missing.

The infrastructure should include elements of quality service, from training workers to adequately compensating them, which the President discussed partially this morning with his new pronouncements on policy. That infrastructure should include the education of parents to correct problems they have in knowing how to identify quality early care, a key finding in the cost and quality study. Educare should then assure parents and providers that parents will have the opportunity to choose care for their children and when the parents select quality that decision would be supported by financial incentives that incrementally

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reward those who choose to use this system for the primary purpose of Educare -- to quote Ed Ziegler, "The delivery to school of a capable child ready to learn."

To prepare for today, I had a conference call with Nicole Rabner, Joan Lombardi, Noah Meyer, and Jennifer Kline, who, by the way, have done a terrific job of organizing things today.

(Applause.)

In that conference call, they said, "Mr. Price, we anticipate that you will be the last of the panel speakers before the end of the day." They did not tell me how long they would be. They said, "You might want to encourage action on what we have heard today." And then we talked about a couple of different things and we really could not agree on a suitable theme for a call to action.

My bittersweet inspiration came a couple of hours later. Governor Romer and I, as I said, share the same mentor when it comes to issues that relate to children. You've got to know this guy. He's a bigger-than-life figure. He was a Naval aviator in his youth, chairman of an important American corporation during

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his career, a giant in the philanthropic community in his retirement, and a Republican to the core. Within the span of a couple hours both of us received a similar call. Our friend asked me to drop by his home so he could visit with me. I knew that he had been suffering from cancer for some time and so I was not surprised when he let me know that his doctor told him to get his affairs in order.

Like most men, my ability to express emotion is limited to a range of anger to annoyance.

(Laughter.)

Few of us are prepared to talk to a friend and comfort them or ourselves about death and loss. But Brad and I agreed that we were not the types of people to have friends, but instead we tended to pick a good fight, then surround ourselves with soldiers in that cause. I let him know that it had been a pleasure serving under his command -- a dumb thing to say, but I am a captive of my gender. That is when I knew I was in trouble.

He locked in on me with his piercing blue eyes and he said, "Doug, my satisfaction comes, not from the

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products I left at my old company, not the programs I leave in the civic arena, my satisfaction comes from the people I have seen commit themselves to the cause of children." He said, "Doug, I am convinced that you will change the world or at least the world for America's children." At this point I grimaced, but he would not relent. He said, "You and 100 people like you around the country have to, because it cannot be done in Washington. It has to be out there."

My ordinary shoulders are far too narrow to carry that mantle, but we are not alone here in Washington. Out there today, joining us by satellite and every day by their actions, are thousands of other ordinary people who have distinguished themselves with extraordinary commitment to the future of our kids. In here are 100 extraordinary people distinguished by their ability to lead. Together we may not change the world for America's children, but we may just change the neighborhood in the rear-view mirror as we drive to work each morning.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

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VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well, Doug, you can tell from the reaction of everyone here, and I dare say at the satellite locations also, that was fantastic. Some of us have been watching the World Series lately and with those metaphors on my mind, I would say this panel loaded up the bases and you just knocked it right out of the park.

(Laughter.)

So thank you very much, and I bet you there are a lot of women and men here who have devoted their lives to these issues who were thinking to themselves when you were going through your background and your pathway into this issue -- they were thinking to themselves, God bless you for taking this on and doing what you are doing because that kind of commitment, which came to you as it did, is really how this thing is going to get solved. So boy, that was great, and everybody here on this panel has been great. Each and every one of you have just done a super job.

Reflecting briefly on Doug's last comments, I think that the solutions that are in the works out in the country are the ones that we need. But under

President Clinton's leadership and with the First Lady's guidance on this issue, our philosophy in this administration has been that the old models for the role of the federal government are kind of out of date. There was one old model that says hands off, the federal government is going to create more problems than it can ever solve so it should just stay completely out of it.

The second choice was kind of a top-down central government/micromanagement "wrestle reality to the ground," suffocating, expensive approach that does not have any support anymore anyway. Yet there is a third way that says the federal government must play a role in empowering all of the individuals, families, public and private groups, localities, and states that are coming up with these solutions to empower people with the tools they need to succeed, and with the framework that improves the odds of success, with the elevated awareness of the kinds of creative solutions that are coming in a lot of these locations around the country and from some of the programs in Colorado and elsewhere that we have heard about on this panel.

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I believe that the kind of partnership approach that has been talked about throughout this White House conference today is really the answer. And the kinds of structural changes that will empower people, the kinds of new initiatives that can help the success at the local level -- that is exciting to contemplate.

I want to thank all of those who have come today. Before I turn it back over to the First Lady, Jane Maroney mentioned Faith Wall among the people that she had worked with, and I want to acknowledge my debt to Faith. She has worked with the National Performance Review on Reinventing Government and with Tipper and me on our family policy conferences, and we wish her well in her new venture. I want to thank Susan Liss, Tipper's chief of staff, who has done a great job for our part in this.

And I want to thank the tremendous staff of the First Lady that, under her leadership, has done such a super job. Miland Rivere and all of the talented women and men who are working with her really deserve to be commended. But most of all, again, in

closing for my part in this, I just want to say that I sometimes think that it will be many years before people fully appreciate and acknowledge the kind of energy and creativity the First Lady has brought to focusing our country on challenges that have never had this kind of focus before.

And I really appreciate the chance to participate in this and in turning this back over for the closing comments to the First Lady, I want to presume to speak for all of us here and out there to say, thank you very much for creating this whole thing.

(Standing ovation.)

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you. You all stay up, because we are finished, and I invite everyone here to the reception on the south lawn. You will probably want to grab your coats, because I think it is a little bit chilly and the sun is starting to go down.

But I do want to thank you for a very productive day and we look forward to working with all of you and the thousands of people around the country who care about this issue so that we can see the changes that we are all talking about and hoping for.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

(Whereupon, the conference was concluded.)

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